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## Sustaining Success in Haiti...

by Robert Oakley and Michael Dziedzic

### Conclusions

- The objectives sought in UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 940 have been achieved--but are not irreversible. The next several months are critical.
- Sustaining the success of Operation *Uphold Democracy* requires Haiti--and the international community--to confront, simultaneously, crucial transitions in political leadership, law and order, economic assistance, and the international military presence.
- Freezing humanitarian aid and long-term financial support to force reforms is counterproductive. Such international pressure weakens the Haitian government's ability to improve living conditions--undermining domestic support for democracy, increasing the risk of lawlessness--which decrease the likelihood of reform and increase the likelihood of yet another boatlift.
- Due to delays in recruitment and training, Haitian police forces lack most of the supervisors and much of the experience needed to successfully maintain order if the last UN forces leave as scheduled by July 1996. A follow-on international force will likely be needed while the Haitian National Police (HNP) become capable of autonomous action.

### Background

The next several months will be crucial as Haiti confronts four fundamental transitions:

- **Political Leadership:** Relations between the business class and the new political elite; between the executive and an increasingly independent Parliament; and between Jean Bertrand Aristide and his successor, President Rene Preval, all remain in flux.
- **Law and Order:** Responsibility for public security has shifted from an Interim Public Security Force with 900 UN civilian police (Civ-Pol) monitors working closely with a highly visible Multinational Force (MNF) and United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH) military forces to the inexperienced HNP with few trained supervisors, only 300 Civ-Pol, and no visible UNMIH military liaison.
- **Economic Assistance:** Instead of readily available humanitarian aid and balance of payments support, much assistance is frozen pending enactment of several controversial reforms. Without

external funding, the Government of Haiti (GOH) will be unable to function beyond mid-summer, yet severe unemployment, balance of payment deficits, and other macro-economic problems persist after years of exploitation by the country's despotic leadership and the devastating impact of the embargo.

- **International Military Presence:** UNMIH has been reduced from a 6,500-member, U.S.-dominated, highly mobile force to a much smaller, less mobile contingent with no U.S. participation; unless there is an extension to the mandate, UN presence will end July 1, 1996.

### **Will Success Endure?**

The last U.S. soldier serving as part of the UNMIH departed Port-au-Prince April 17, 1996. The remaining force of 1,900 Canadian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi troops is led by a Canadian general. The U.S. military "exit strategy" has been executed as planned, in a three-phased transition that began with the replacement of the U.S.-led 22,000 member MNF by a contingent of 6,000 UNMIH troops in March 1995.

The objectives established in UNSC Resolution 940 have been achieved. The credible threat of U.S. military action, combined with the 11th-hour diplomacy of the Carter-Nunn-Powell mission, peacefully dislodged the Cedras regime where all else had failed. A secure and stable environment was established, allowing open and orderly elections to be held for local and national level officials. This was followed by an even more historic event: Haiti's first peaceful transfer of power from one democratically-elected president to another. Remarkably, the entire process of controlling and ultimately dissolving the Haitian Armed Forces was accomplished with only one U.S. service member killed in action. An entirely new police force of 5,200 was recruited, given four months training, and deployed by February 1996. Large-scale relief efforts and temporary work projects helped alleviate the misery of the masses. Progress was made in restoring basic infrastructure such as electricity, roads, and water, and a few private sector enterprises also resumed operations. A crucial factor undergirding these achievements was the exceptional cooperation among key players: the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General Lakhdar Brahimi, the U.S. (and UN) force commander Maj. Gen. Joseph Kinzer, the U.S. Ambassador William Lacey Swing, and Haitian authorities.

In the process, U.S. interests in Haiti--stopping atrocities, securing our borders against illegal immigration, promoting democracy in the hemisphere, upholding our international commitments, and restoring national credibility tarnished by the abortive deployment of the *USS Harlan County*--were also furthered.

Although the MNF and the UNMIH successfully accomplished their assigned tasks, some of these achievements are fragile and subject to reversal. Much remains to be done by the extended UNMIH mission, by the United States, the international community, and principally by the Haitian people themselves. If success is to be sustained in Haiti, each of these actors will need to take appropriate measures.

**Political Leadership:** Haiti's democratic roots are shallow, and the ability of the government to respond to citizen needs is severely constrained. A genuine commitment to resolve future political disputes through peaceful, democratic means has yet to be forged. The conduct of the French-speaking oligarchy and of hard-core Aristide supporters within the Lavalas movement will be particularly crucial. The possibility also exists that essential economic reforms could be thwarted by opposition from within Lavalas. If political gridlock immobilizes the Preval government, eroding its legitimacy and prolonging economic stagnation, domestic stability could give way to serious disorder, with all the attendant

consequences.

Also vital to the consolidation of democracy is governmental performance. Given that Haitian government has traditionally been little more than a mechanism of self-enrichment, a major role reversal is obviously required if it is to respond effectively to the basic needs of the people. Dire shortages of both material resources and administrative-technical expertise at all levels immensely compound this challenge.

**Law and Order:** In spite of Herculean efforts to create a police force *de novo*, serious voids remain:

- *Recruitment and training of a full cadre of supervisors* for Haiti's rookie police force. When Preval took office, only 35 of 257 supervisory billets had been filled. (This deficiency is being addressed by Preval's new public security team. However, it is constrained by an extremely limited pool of talent and by the need to purge some questionable Aristide appointees.)
- *Intensive on-the-job training*, to include programs for crowd control and community relations (delayed by holds on U.S. funding) and long-term mentoring for HNP cadres by UN Civ-Pol monitors.
- *Development of a competent and objective investigative capability* (delayed initially by Aristide and subsequently by holds on U.S. funding.)
- *Acquisition and maintenance of essential equipment*, particularly for transportation and communication (also delayed by holds on U.S. funding.)

Owing to these major but resolvable shortcomings, the HNP will not be capable of autonomously maintaining a secure and stable environment until long after the scheduled July 1, 1996, departure of the extended UNMIH mission.

To have any lasting impact, improvements in law enforcement must be accompanied by similar developments in the courts and prisons, particularly given the structure of Haitian jurisprudence which requires judicial direction before the police may conduct investigations or make arrests. In the absence of a functional judicial system, the HNP could eventually be inclined to take justice into its own hands, and organized crime, especially drug traffickers, could become a severe threat to democratic governance.

**Economic Assistance:** Regime stability in the near term will largely depend on the perceived likelihood of economic growth and the government's ability to begin responding to basic citizen needs.

Well-publicized pledges of assistance by the United States and the international community have led to expectations that living conditions should already have begun to improve. Bloody encounters between the HNP and street gangs in the slums of *Cite Soliel* in early March accentuated the need to focus assistance expeditiously on potential trouble spots. Resources already pledged (Approximately \$950 million from 1996-99) should be adequate, if properly targeted. An inability to bring about tangible improvements could be destabilizing for the Preval government and produce a new wave of migration.

Addressing these rising expectations necessarily involves both long-term structural reform (e.g., privatization and civil service reform) and near-term improvement in living conditions. Paradoxically, the reforms, although essential for sustainable growth and for the release of most long-term international assistance, could nevertheless exacerbate economic distress in the short run. This is an especially contentious issue within the Haitian Parliament. Preval must patch together a coalition in support of reforms that Aristide had refused to address. Haitian authorities also confront serious resource constraints, limited bureaucratic and organizational capabilities, and growing public impatience.

U.S. policy makers and international financial institutions need to strike a prudent balance between withholding economic assistance as an inducement to reform, versus the injection of funds essential for economic revitalization and political performance. Denial of assistance could undermine domestic confidence in the Preval government to such an extent that it becomes too feeble to adopt or implement the very reforms being sought by the international community. At the moment, the benefits of bolstering the Preval government by carefully calibrated assistance are perhaps at a premium. The damaging consequences of a prolonged suspension of aid would be compounded by uncertainty over the country's stability after UNMIH's ultimate withdrawal (now set for July 1st) since the HNP is not yet able to maintain law and order on its own.

### **Immediate Measures to Sustain Success in Haiti**

With the departure of U.S. troops in mid-April, responsibility for preserving democratic practices and resurrecting the economy shifted onto Haitian shoulders. This transition is fraught with uncertainty, and the continuing engagement of the international community, led by the United States, will be vital to assure that the successes of the MNF and UNMIH missions are sustained. The next several months will be crucial. The linchpin will be to bolster positive public perceptions in Haiti regarding Preval's political stature, the country's economic prospects, and the competence of the HNP. This does not necessarily require additional funding, but rather judicious targeting of existing resources to have an immediate impact on vital areas.

**Political Leadership:** A critical need, at present, is to galvanize the GOH's capacity to convert assistance into tangible projects having a direct impact at the grassroots level. One measure that could be taken would be to assign U.S. Army Civil Affairs officers, on temporary duty, to work directly in key ministries--as was done during the fall of 1994 to help Aristide resurrect the governmental apparatus and jump-start the economy. Special priority should be given to eliminating dysfunctional government practices that impede delivery of services, to supporting the judiciary, and to bolstering the public information function.

**Law and Order:** The need to provide additional mentoring for the HNP rank and file, train specialized units, and develop a cadre of supervisors is clearly understood. The United States has the lead--through the International Criminal Investigation and Training Assistance Program--with support from Canada and France. Programs have been developed to address these needs. However, U.S. funding has been delayed because of various Congressional concerns, including the perceived inadequacy of investigations into alleged political killings. (Approximately \$1 million was released on March 22, 1996, allowing the resumption of certain law enforcement training. Other funds and key programs remained on hold.) Avoiding similar U.S. executive-legislative impasses in the future will be crucial to the viability of an autonomous HNP and Preval's prospects as president.

The 300 UN Civ-Pol monitors will be pivotal in providing oversight for Haiti's rookie police force. Current strength (100 Canadians, 100 French, and 100 others) has been reduced by two-thirds from its previous level, but it will still need to play a very active, hands-on mentoring role for an extended period. This should include encouraging the HNP to conduct expanded and highly visible patrolling. UNMIH will also need to maintain a highly visible profile and remain poised to assist the HNP as needed with its Quick Reaction Force.

**Economic Assistance:** Especially during the next several months, a share of resources should be dedicated to marginalized urban populations where the greatest potential for destabilizing unrest exists. The HNP and, if necessary, UNMIH should afford security, as required, for aid providers in restive

areas. U.S. Agency for International Development "quick impact projects" can be used for immediate action, with responsibility for implementation assigned to Haitian non-governmental organizations (NGOs), supported by U.S. counterparts. Other international donors should undertake similar accelerated action. Longer term plans have been developed--and international assistance pledged--for economic development in both the public and private sectors, with emphasis upon the latter. These should be expedited.

**International Military Presence:** With the HNP still in its infancy, departure of UNMIH on July 1st would clearly be premature; however, any further UNMIH extension would assuredly encounter staunch resistance from Russia and China. It is prudent, therefore, to consider other alternatives for maintaining a residual international military presence to assure public order until the HNP has acquired the experience and resources to take full responsibility.

Without a mandate extension, the options are another coalition force blessed but not funded by the UN (such as the MNF), or several purely bilateral accords. In either case, it is likely that Canada, having made the political commitment and borne the sunk cost of deploying its military units, would be willing to remain. The Canadian government has not only taken on a major responsibility in Haiti, they have done so largely at their own expense. They would be reluctant, however, to assume the entire task unilaterally, and a multinational presence would also be much more acceptable to the GOH. If the UN does not authorize a further extension, potential contributors to an alternative follow-on force (e.g., Pakistan, Argentina, Venezuela, and the Caribbean states) would almost certainly require funding from some other source.

The United States retains a 275-450 member Support Group in Haiti, including engineering units temporarily assigned to perform training activities. The contribution their presence makes to public security would need to be reevaluated in light of changing circumstances. To permit a smooth transfer to any follow-on force by early July, and to avoid the unsettling perception of a lapse in public security, action to extend UNMIH's mandate or to create a separate follow-on force must be taken promptly.

The destiny of Haiti is now in the hands of its people and their democratically elected leadership. By remaining engaged, the international community can maximize prospects that the developmental process remains on course and does not falter for simply technical reasons. Just as vital, perhaps, is the psychological signal this sends to the Haitian people of support for the Preval regime as it grapples with some very nettlesome decisions.

#### Recommendations

As Haiti copes with fundamental transitions in the character of its political and economic systems, public security apparatus, and international military presence, the following short-term actions would maximize prospects for success:

- Release sufficient humanitarian aid and balance of payments support to promote GOH readiness for reforms and provide urgent grassroots socio-economic assistance.
- Reinforce positive public perceptions in Haiti regarding Preval's political stature, and boost the government's capacity to convert outside assistance into tangible projects at the grassroots level.
- Target a share of resources immediately to marginalized urban populations where the greatest potential for destabilizing unrest exists.

- Provide additional mentoring for the HNP rank and file, prepare specialized units, and train a professional cadre of supervisors.
- Act promptly to extend UNMIH's mandate or create a separate follow-on force.

INSS held a simulation on March 28th examining future prospects for Haiti. Specialists from Canada, U.S. State and Defense Department organizations, the Haitian NGO umbrella organization Inter-Action, and several distinguished academic experts participated. This paper is taken from the simulation's conclusions and recommendations, as well as from judgments formed during INSS research in Haiti. For more information contact Ambassador Oakley at (202) 685-3837, ext. 510, or Col. Michael Dziedzic at ext. 548. NOTE

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